

FROM: **Polish Community Council of Western Australia**
TO:

Mr Andrew Alwast
President
Rada Naczelna Polonii Australijskiej
PO Box 705
Civic Square, ACT 2608

Szanowny Panie Prezesie,

As previously advised the Polish Community Council of Western Australia held a meeting on Tuesday, 27th July 2010 at which the possibility of having POLART 2012 in Perth and the current situation with the existing POLART 2012 Preparation Committee were discussed at length.

To assist interested parties to understand the situation better and to stop them from making negative comments about the Polish Community Council of WA without having any knowledge of the events that took place, we present the facts in chronological order:

1. On 20th January 2010 we were advised by letter from Dance Group "Kukuleczka" **that it has been decided that POLART 2012 will be held in Perth and it will take place from 27th December 2012 to 6th January 2013.** We did not know who and how it was decided. The same letter invited us to attend a meeting on 7th February 2010 at the Polish Roman Catholic Centre at which a Preparation Committee will be formed. (**att 1**).
2. On the 28th January 2010 we received an email from Mr Andrew Alwast and Mr Andrew Munk . In Mr Munk's email we read that:"the decision regarding POLART 2012 has not been made, Perth would love to have Festival in Perth but they were not prepared. Managers of the folkloric Groups decided at the end of the Festival that if Perth could not present a plan for POLART 2012-by the end of March, then Melbourne as the next POL ART festival will be proposed"..... (**att 2**).
3. On 29th January 2010 and 30th January 2010 emails were circulated between the Polish Community Council of Australia and the Polish Community Council of WA regarding POLART 2012 in Perth and POLART Regulations. People were both questioning and confirming the importance of the Regulations of POLART.
4. At the meeting on 7th February 2010 at the Polish Roman Catholic Centre we were told that actually part of the Committee is already operating and we just need to include some more people in it. The Preparation Committee selected on the day were: Anna Schmidt, Kasia Schmidt, Joanna Wydmanska, Anna Niedzwiadek, Marek Wojtasik.
5. During that meeting many people, also those who are not involved in the Polish Community Council of WA, spoke about Regulations of POLART and stated that we need to start with the actual procedures that need to be followed. That statement was not welcomed by the majority present.
6. On 17th March 2010 we received a letter form POLART PERTH 2012 Preparation Committee advising us that **Preparation Committee believes that it would be advisable to attach a letter of support from the Polish Community Council of WA to their proposal**, therefore they would like to meet with us and discuss preparation for POLART 2012.

7. Polish Community Council of WA decided to postpone our planned agenda and gave POLART 2012 absolute priority dedicating our monthly meeting on 23rd March 2010 to POLART.
8. At the meeting on 23rd March 2010 we learnt that some members selected at the meeting on 7th February 2010 resigned for reasons unknown to us and there are two new members who simply joined the Committee. Anna Schmidt and Kasia Schmidt left the Committee and Maryla Kuzmicka and Agata Burak joined the Committee.
9. On 29th March 2010 we received a copy of the proposal for POLART 2012 prepared by the Preparation Committee. It was an impressive document and we were ready to support it in-principle as there wasn't enough time to check the merits of the proposal which needed to be lodged with the Polish Community Council of Australia by the 31st March 2010.
10. On 31st March 2010 we provided a letter of support to POLART 2012 Perth Preparation Committee in which we offered a general support for POLART 2012 in Perth and complimented them on their hard work which resulted in the proposal presented. **We offered our experience, contacts with Government and non-Government agencies and asked for members of the Polish Community Council of WA to be part of the Preparation Committee and help with the initial stages of organizing POLART 2012 in Perth.** We also expressed a disappointment that the Preparation Committee decided not to inform us about their activities. (att 3)
11. In response to our letter we received a letter from POLART Preparation Committee in Perth stating amongst other things: “ **in your letter you emphasized that Polish Community Council of WA would like to actively participate in organizing POLART in Perth. Thank you for your offer and we are awaiting written applications from interested persons..**” (att 4)
12. We are aware of the correspondence between POLART Preparation Committee Perth 2012 and the President of The Polish Community Council of Australia regarding the conflicting interpretations of POLART Regulations and the possibility of having POLART 2012 in Perth.
13. Congress of Polish Community Council of Australia held in June 2010 rejected the proposal of POLART Preparation Committee Perth 2012 and the reasons stated in the letter dated 21.06.2010 were:...”**Polish Community Council of Australia can not support such an important event without appropriate written undertaking from both the umbrella body and from all members of POLART Committee stating that they must adhere to the Regulations of POLART and they will take responsibility for organizing the festival**” ... That letter also urged Polish Community Council of WA to organize a meeting which would establish means of cooperation with the group organized by Anna Niedzwiadek and formal selection of POLART Committee. Copy of that letter was also sent to Anna Niedzwiadek. (att. 5)
14. On 26th June 2010 the President and the Secretary of the Polish Community Council of WA tried again to establish some link with the Preparation Committee 2012. Knowing that our previous attempts did not produce positive results we asked Fr. Tomasz Bujakowski for assistance. Fr. Tomasz, who had already been asked to be a chaplain of POLARTT 2012, agreed to talk to members of Preparation Committee and convince them that there is no other way but to cooperate closely with Polish Community Council of WA. As a result of that meeting, the same day Anna Niedzwiadek contacted us asking for a meeting. We responded to that request more than promptly by changing our plans and inviting Preparation Committee to our monthly meeting on 29th June 2010.

15. During that meeting attended by two members of Preparation Committee namely Anna Niedzwiadek and Marek Wojtasik **the reasons for the current crisis were discussed and it was decided that both parties need to work together to rectify the existing situation.** Polish Community Council of WA was appreciative of the work done by Preparation Committee and willing to accept some if not all of the proposal providing that we would have an insight into decision making process. The reason being that if the Polish Community Council of WA was to take moral and financial responsibility for POL ART 2012 we needed to know all the facts. Being more specific we asked to be presented with records of their work done especially in regard to the selection criteria for members of the Committee and the selection process applied. Representatives of Preparation Committee informed us that they have a meeting the following day and will present our proposal. **Members of the Polish Community Council of WA present at the meeting were under the impression that we had a chance to turn the existing situation into a working relationship between POL ART 2012 Preparation Committee with Polish Community Council of WA.** We acknowledged the good work done to date by the Preparation Committee. **WE ALL AGREED** that selecting a new POLART Preparation Committee would be very difficult to be accepted by both the existing POLART Preparation Committee and the Polish Community Council of WA.
16. On 15th July 2010 we asked the Preparation Committee for their decision regarding matters discussed at the meeting on 29th June 2010 and we forwarded a list of the issues discussed at the meeting on 29th June 2010 (**att 6**).
17. On 16th July 2010 we received an email from Preparation Committee describing the events at the meeting on 29th June 2010 as:....”**Polish Community Council presenting its demands regarding organizing POLART..** (att 7). It is simple to understand that as a responsible body the PCC of WA asked the Preparation Committee to present documents regarding the selection criteria and the process undertaken to select the final committee. It was necessary for us to satisfy ourselves that the process met with the guidelines of fairness and equity and was open and transparent. At that meeting we felt that it would be possible to achieve the best outcome for all of us. We felt positive that we could move forward with the preparations for Pol Art 2012 in Perth. However, it did not happen as the Preparation Committee did not provide the requested documentation but chose to discontinue any further action regarding Pol Art 2012.
18. On 21st July we received a letter from Preparation Committee questioning our record of the discussion at the meeting on 29th June 2010 with comments which clearly indicated that cooperation between Polish Community Council of WA and existing POLART Perth 2012 simply isn't possible. (**att 8**).
19. On 22nd July 2010 we received an email advising us and many other recipients of that correspondence about the withdrawal of the proposal by POLART 2012 Perth Preparation Committee. Members of the Polish Community Council of WA were taken by surprise at this turn of events. We were shocked that the Preparation Committee had apportioned all the blame for their withdrawal on the Polish Community Council of WA. The real reasons for withdrawal will probably be known to the wider Polish community in the future. However, it would be advisable that the Preparation Committee refrain from making general negative comments which are repeated by other parties on the net, by people who know nothing about the situation.
20. We believe that POLART Perth Preparation Committee's attitude towards cooperation with Polish Community Council of WA is very well expressed by their actions – they don't talk to us, they talk about us. The letter of resignation dated 21

June (or should it be 21 July) alleges certain adverse and negative actions by the Polish Community Council of WA but no specifics are provided (**att 9**).

21. At the meeting on 27th July 2010 we have examined our actions in regards to POLART 2012 in Perth and we have come to the following conclusions:
- a. We were and are of the opinion that PolArt Festivals are conducted under the auspices of the Polish Community Council of Australia and as such are responsible for adhering to the Regulations as set out by the Council. It appears that from the start of the preparations of Pol Art 2012 in Perth such regulations were not adhered to and totally disregarded by the Preparation Committee.
 - b. We were and are concerned with a short time left for the preparation of Pol Art 2012, we were of the opinion that organizing POLART Pert 2015 will be more realistic.
 - c. We offered support and cooperation but unfortunately all our offers were rejected.
 - d. We were impressed with the good work, enthusiasm and determination of the Preparation Committee and we acknowledged that.
 - e. We were willing to accept their work done to date and give them all the support needed to continue work they started, providing that we would know what we are actually supporting and for what we would be responsible.
 - f. Polish Community Council of WA has a strong commitment to the young people and has encouraged them to participate in the life of the Polish community in Perth. It has been instrumental in putting nominations of young Polish people for State awards.
 - g. We feel that the Polish Community Council of WA has been made a scapegoat by the Preparation Committee for their decision to withdraw from PolArt 2012.

Polish Community Council of WA wishes to express its disappointment regarding the Preparation Committee's withdrawal from PolArt 2012 in Perth.

Our members had many happy experiences in attending Pol Art Festivals in Adelaide, Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney and Hobart. According to documentation from Mr Andrzej Munk that during Pol Art Festival in Adelaide 2010 some members of the Polish group expressed a desire to hold the next Pol Art in Perth but they were totally unprepared with their proposal. The Polish community in Perth was totally unaware of such steps. Had we known in advance this crisis would not have eventuated as the Polish community would have acted differently in accordance with the Polish Community Council of Australia regulations regarding Pol Art Festivals.

The Polish Community Council of WA is in favour for Pol Art Festival to be held in Perth provided every subsequent committee meets its obligations and discharges its duties diligently and in keeping with all matters of justice and equity.

In conclusion, we would be very happy to have POLART 2012 in Perth and welcome many members of Polonia to our city. We are aware that many young people would love to come to Perth for POLART and for a holiday too. We can understand that knowing how beautiful our city is. We are aware that it would require a lot of work and effort from all involved and that

that work must be open, transparent and accountable. It would be the only way for our organisation to take responsibility for POLART 2012 in Perth.

We believe that in the light of the latest actions of the POLART 2012 Perth Preparation Committee, Polish Community Council of Australia has three options:

1. Confirm in writing that existing POLART Regulations aren't operational and don't need to be

observed by POLART Perth 2012 Preparation Committee and endorse that Committee as the

official representatives of Polish Community Council of Australia and allow them to continue

unilaterally their work on POLART 2012.

2. Confirm in writing that existing POLART Regulations are operational and must be observed and

leave the organization of POLART in Perth to Polish Community Council of WA.

3. Allocate POLART 2012 to another City.

Polish Community Council of WA will accept any of the above mentioned options.

We trust that the information provided will assist the Polish Community Council of Australia to make a final decision regarding POLART 2012. We are a very active organisation and have many projects that require our attention, however, we are more than happy to be involved in POLART in Perth.

We hope that our letter will clarify the actual situation and stop baseless and unsubstantiated accusations being posted about us on the internet with comments from people who simply repeat someone else's opinions before they ask any questions. Therefore we ask the Polish Community Council of Australia to finalise this matter as soon as possible so we can continue our positive work.

Z wyrazami szacunku

*Halina T. Szunejko OAM
Prezes*

*Danuta Pałysz JP
Sekretarz*

1st August 2010

NB Attachements were provided with the hard copy to the Polish Community Council of Australia.